



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Internal Services Department
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Director

To enrich lives through effective and caring service

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To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
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From: Tom Tindall *Tom Tindall*
Director

Subject: **STATUS REPORT ON THE RECONFIGURATION OF THE
COUNTYWIDE INTEGRATED RADIO SYSTEM (CWIRS)**

This is to provide your Board with a status of the Internal Services Department (ISD) project for frequency band reconfiguration of the Countywide Integrated Radio System (CWIRS). Since our last report (March 2, 2009), the implementation phase of the project continues to remain on hold pending resolution of U.S.-Mexico treaty negotiations for frequency allocations. The U.S. State Department has not released any information on the status of the negotiations. As a result, we are unable to predict when implementation will proceed.

Background

CWIRS is a County radio system used for mobile communications by a number of County departments, including Health Services, Public Health, Public Works, Probation, and ISD. The Sheriff and Fire Departments do not use CWIRS. CWIRS serves the day-to-day operations of the user departments. In an emergency, such as a major earthquake, public health, or terrorist incident, the system serves as the County's primary disaster recovery communications system.

Approximately ten years ago, communication systems throughout the County using the 800 MHz radio frequency band (including CWIRS) began to experience interference. After an investigation, the Federal Communications Commission determined that the interference was caused by adjacent frequency use by Nextel Communications, Inc. (now Sprint Nextel).

In order to eliminate the interference, the FCC issued an order in 2004 requiring all 800 MHz licensees to move to new frequencies. The FCC further ordered that Sprint Nextel provide the funding to all licensees to reconfigure their systems.

A Two-Phase Project

Under the FCC rebanding program, reconfiguration is a two-phase project. ISD completed Phase 1 (Planning) in early 2009, and submitted its plan and cost proposal to Sprint Nextel for Phase 2 (Implementation). However, Phase 2 is on hold pending resolution of the U.S.-Mexico negotiations. If the reconfiguration is completed under the current plan and with current technology, we anticipate the cost to be approximately \$50 million. Under the FCC order, this cost would be borne by Sprint Nextel.

Industry Technology Changes

Since the FCC issued its order in 2004, the radio systems industry has developed new technologies, including new standards for improved interoperability. For this reason, ISD will be issuing a Request for Information to investigate technology alternatives to the current CWIRS reconfiguration design.

Status and Next Steps

Commencement of Phase 2 (Implementation) remains on hold pending completion of the Mexico treaty negotiations by the U.S. State Department.

When a U.S.-Mexico treaty is resolved and we receive new frequency allocations, ISD will complete negotiations and will present the Phase 2 agreements and/or recommendations for future action to your Board for your review and approval.

We will continue to update your Board periodically or as significant developments occur. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (323) 267-2101, or have your staff contact David Mayer, ISD Telecommunications Branch Manager, at (562) 940-2907.

TT:DM

c: ISD Board Deputies
William T Fujioka, CEO
Ellen Sandt, DCEO
Rich Sanchez, CIO